

A-LIST ELECTRIC GUITARIST - POP CHORDS 2.0

OPERATION MANUAL



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A-List Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords 2.0

Introduction



Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords is the third Rack Extension instrument in the A-List series for Propellerhead Reason and Reason Essentials - after Acoustic Guitarist and Electric Guitarist "Power Chords". Think of *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* as a professional session guitarist, playing electric rhythm guitar on a top-notch instrument hooked up to hand-selected vintage amps and cabinets, and performing exactly as you wish, while giving you full control over musical performance and mix.

Whether you want to add realistic rhythm guitar tracks to your productions, use it as an inspiration for writing songs on a train or plane, or as source material for creative sound design - it will get you from idea to result as fast as possible.

At the core of *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* - and all instruments in the Propellerhead A-List series - is the idea that you can create professional sounding instrument tracks exactly the way you would get them from an A-List player in the studio. There, you'd give them a lead sheet, adjust sound character and mix, and tell your session guitarist what kind of musical style and performance you're expecting, and a great player would deliver that.

Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords does exactly that for you: the lead sheet becomes MIDI notes in your Reason tracks (or played live on a MIDI controller), there are controls for sound character and mix, you load styles and select phrases in real-time, and there are performance controls to vary the performance.

Whatever *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* does, it does extremely well, fast, and asking absolute minimal effort of you. We never sacrificed instant gratification and simplicity in favor of a more complex result!

What does Pop Chords mean exactly?

"Pop Chords" means that this guitarist is at home in a full range of electric rhythm guitar flavors needed in pop and rock music across decades - from clean to crunched, from chords to octaves, from British to American. It even does Europop. All styles function across a wide range of tempos; for most styles there's also a double or halftime version.

Chords have been recorded distinctly at mid range, sitting perfectly between bass and melody. On top of the chord styles, there are Octave styles - rhythmic phrases played by single-note octaves, covering almost three octaves of range and extending your Pop Chords guitarist's repertoire by melodic riffs as well as the rhythmic arsenal for all kinds of disco, funk and soul. There's even a few bonus single notes for rock eights.

Try it now - it's easy and fun!

Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords is designed for creating stunning dynamic performances using only a MIDI keyboard (even Reason's on-screen keyboard if you know how to switch octaves), and very simple commands. The perfectly played phrases and styles all come built in. All you need to do is provide chords, pick phrases and optionally make (real-time) adjustments. You can even dynamically control palm muting of the strings for dynamic expression and creation of your own phrasings.

Here's how it basically works - and we encourage you to try it now.

1. Create an *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* device in the rack.

It will load a default style that's all you need for now.

2. Start playing on your connected MIDI keyboard or the built-in Interactive Keyboard.

→ Hit a key or chord from the note C4 and upwards and *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* will start playing.

→ Activate the Latch switch so it keeps playing.



→ Hit the note B3 when you want to stop the playback in Latch Mode.

→ Move the Mod Wheel or apply Aftertouch on your MIDI keyboard to apply palm muting.

You can live-control palm muting using the Mod Wheel or Aftertouch. Turning up the Mod Wheel gradually increases the pressure of the palm, Aftertouch switches between no and full pressure.

→ Vary the phrasing.

Pressing keys (or generally: sending MIDI notes) between C1 and Bb3 selects phrases. The lower two octaves select a set of standard phrases, the C3-Bb3 octave selects phrases of the currently loaded style.

→ Change the sound character.

Use the Guitar and Amp selectors and the Crunch control to vary the overall tone of the guitar sound.

→ Add a second guitar player.

Activate the Doubling switch in the performance section to activate a second player (similar to overdubbing in the studio), with the players panned left and right in the stereo image.

Background

It is important to know that *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* does not emulate a guitar. It does not let you edit individual notes, but it also does not require you to know to play a guitar on a keyboard, or to think about how to emulate realistic strumming or typical guitar voicings. It has all that built in, simply because it is based on actual rhythm guitar recordings, not samples of individual notes.

What *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* emulates is therefore a studio guitarist who already knows how to play. Because when you have an idea in your head and want to lay it down, the last thing you want is struggle with MIDI editing and trying to make a MIDI performance sound realistic. What you need is a professional player recording your idea the way you want it. That's exactly what *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* does.

The foundation of *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* is real performances on a top-notch electric guitar, played by a professional guitarist, and a sophisticated amp/speaker simulation for a wide range of styles and colors.

The performances have been recorded with a clean sound, and are live-processed through built-in pickup, amplifier and cabinet emulations for maximum realism and flexibility. You can tweak and perfect the sound character for your musical taste and mix.

During the sessions for *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords*, thousands of phrases were played and recorded, totaling more than 10 hours of guitar performances. Those were then meticulously selected, adjusted and prepared in a sophisticated and unique way, allowing us to create a Rack Extension that can play virtually any guitar phrase at any tempo and always sound like an original performance.

Panel overview

The *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* front panel contains the following sections:



Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords front panel sections.

- **1. Source section** (for selecting guitar and amp character, adjusting Crunch and choosing drop tuning).
- **2. Performance section** (for telling the "virtual player" which Style to play and for tweaking a few performance parameters).
- **3. Mix section** (for adding basic guitar-type effects, boosting the sound and adjusting the volume of the audio output).
- **4. Patch selector** (for browsing, loading and saving patches).
- **5. Interactive keyboard** (for telling the "virtual player" which Phrases and Chords to play).

Loading and saving patches



Loading and saving patches is done in the same way as with any other internal Reason/Reason Essentials device - see the "Sounds and Patches" chapter in the Reason/Reason Essentials Operation Manual pdf for details.

! On instantiating *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords*, or when loading Combinator Patches featuring *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords*, it can take a few seconds until all content is loaded into RAM.

Panel controls

Source section



In this section you set up the overall guitar sound by selecting a guitar/pickup character, an amp setup (a configuration and setting of amp and speaker cabinet), setting the Crunch (overdrive/distortion) level and applying drop tuning. These settings are highly interactive - as are the originals. Guitarists and sound engineers will know and apply certain classic combinations of amps, guitars and Crunch settings, and you will find many of those in the patches. But that doesn't mean you should not experiment - in the end, the only thing that counts is that it works for your song.

Guitar

The lever switch labeled Guitar lets you select different pickups - as on the original guitar. It offers four distinct choices:

Switch position	Description	Use...
Neck	The pickup with the thickest, roundest sound. Nice low end and warmth.	... for mixes where the guitar has a bit of space and doesn't have to stick through lots of other mid-range rhythmic tracks.
Middle	In the middle between Neck and Bridge - just enough bite and warmth.	... pretty much everywhere where you need a guitar that's not too dominant on either side of the frequency range.
Dual	Glassy, with attenuation in the high mids ("scooped"), therefore not too sharp.	... wherever you need a silky, glassy sound, for example in Disco and all funky styles, particularly clean to lightly crunched.
Bridge	Cuts right through, accented mids with not too much bass.	... when you need the guitar to be clearly audible to dominant, particularly with higher Crunch levels.

Amp

Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords features a perfectly customized guitar amp and cabinet simulation - this means the amp sound is not baked into the recordings. Instead, clean recordings are sent into algorithms emulating real amps, giving you full control and flexibility when it comes to setting up, adjusting and realtime-controlling your amp sound.

The Amp rotary switch lets you choose between five amplifier presets for a large range of musical styles. Each preset is a pre-configuration of an amp and a speaker cabinet, including pre-set internal parameters that provide the right character and range of sonic possibilities for each preset:

Knob position	Character	Use...
Clean	D.I. signal without any amp character. As you turn up Crunch, more of the signal gets routed into a speaker cabinet.	... simply when you want a clean signal, or when you want to send the Pop Chords signal into an external amp.

Knob position	Character	Use...
Bite	We won't mention the F-word, but it's a typical combo amp with a 1x12 speaker cabinet built in the U.S. - lots of bite and presence.	... for a wide range of applications from clean to crunch, when you want the guitar to cut through.
Crisp	The British say "crisps" when they mean hearty and crunchy potato chips, and that's what this British Class-A valve amp is all about.	... whenever you're after well-defined guitar sound with just enough roughness that still covers a wide frequency range.
Cream	A creamier variation of Crisp in that it gives up a bit of presence in return for added warmth and roundness, partly provided by a larger speaker cabinet.	... when you're not as much after presence and bite than after beef and a saturated character with average crunch.
Rough	The proverbial British rock amp with a very unique character in the clean-to-crunch range, with a typical British roughness. We won't say the M-word, still.	... for that crunchy roughness that only a big stack delivers, serving a wide range of styles.

Drop D

This switch lets you activate what guitarists know as Drop D (or Drop) tuning. In *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords*, all strings get tuned down by 2 semitones, the lowest string plays D.

Therefore, when Drop D is activated (pitch is unaffected, of course), *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* sounds a little thicker and warmer in general.

Crunch

This knob adjusts the overdrive level and therefore the amount of distortion of the guitar signal. The effect is very different depending on the Amp setup you've chosen. Naturally, the Guitar and Amp settings at the lower end of the switch will work better with higher Crunch settings, whereas the top ones benefit from a higher dose of clean signal.

Performance section



This section is a mixture of selectors, knobs and displays for selecting and adjusting the musical performance.

Styles and Phrases

Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords is designed to produce rhythm guitar tracks, synced to the sequencer's tempo. As the term indicates, a rhythm guitarist mostly plays phrases, not melodies. A phrase in this context is a rhythmic sequence of strummed chords.

! That said, *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* offers Single-Note and Octave styles which allow you to create rhythmic melodic figures. Octave styles are marked with OCT in the Style name.

A style in *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* is a collection of phrases of a certain musical context. Styles are given descriptive names. Phrases, although, are not named but numbered.

- **From left to right, phrases become more intense - i.e. denser and more animated. You can add to the dynamic expression of a song by selecting phrases accordingly: As you move from intro to verse to chorus, move right on the phrase selection keys and vice versa.**
- **The Phrase playback is always triggered by the MIDI Note On; it's not synced to the sequencer's bar position.** The reason for this is you might not always want the phrase locked to the bar position. This way you can be more creative with re-triggering the phrases and get more "live feel". If you want it locked to the bar position in the sequencer this can still be achieved by positioning the trigger notes and/or switching from the silent phrase at the right moment.

If you change MIDI notes in a legato fashion (tied), the new notes will continue the "phrase-sync" from the previous note.

Octave Styles

Octave styles cover a range of almost 3 octaves. Use them to create melodic riffs. They also complement their chord pendants very well. Check the Combinator presets included with *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* for examples.

Style

In this menu, you can select one of the over 100 phrase sets called "Styles". Each style features 11 individual phrases (see "Style Phrases"). Styles are not editable, but you can build your own by using the CV and Gate inputs on the rear panel (see below).

The meaning of appendices to Style names:

- **OCT: Octave style - this style plays no chords, but single note octaves for melodic riffs.**
- **HalfT/DoubleT: Half- or double-time versions of a style for a wide range of applicable tempos.**

Swing

This knob gradually applies a shuffle feel to the guitar performance by delaying the off-beats.

Depending on the selected style, 8th or 16th note off-beats will be affected. At maximum position, the off-beat will have the same timing as the last note of a triplet.

Not all phrases contain 8th or 16th note off-beats so in these cases the Swing control has no effect.

Feel

With this control you can tell the virtual player to push or play laid back, i.e. it affects the overall timing of the guitar performance. Right from center, off-beats will be slightly advanced (Push), left from center they will be delayed (Pull).

Latch

Use this toggle switch to determine if *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* should always keep playing or only play when keys are held.

If on, *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* will keep playing infinitely after a key is pressed, until either Latch is switched off or the Stop button in the Reason/Reason Essentials sequencer is pressed.

- **The Phrase playback is always triggered by the first MIDI Note On; it's not synced to the sequencer's bar position.**

If you change MIDI notes with Latch on, the new notes will continue the "phrase-sync" from the previous note.

A sustain pedal can be used as a temporary latch (but does not affect the appearance of the Latch switch). Lifting the sustain pedal unlatches any notes that are no longer held, even if the Latch switch is still on, see "Sustain Pedal".

Doubling

Use this function to create the impression of two independent players playing at the same time.

When on, *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* will add a second guitar player to the currently selected signal and places them at opposite stereo positions.

! Note that - when Doubling is active - *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* automatically activates a second, similarly set-up guitar amp to keep the signals separate and enable the stereo effect.

Mix section



Effects

The Effects section adds essential guitar-type effects to the sound:

Effect	Control	Description	Knob controls...
Delay	Delay	Synchronized stereo delay with preset feedback and damping and variable note values (see Rate below).	Wet/Dry
	Rate	Switches between the following delay rates: 1/32, 1/16, 3/32, 1/8, 3/16, 1/4.	Delay time presets
Chorus		A classical 4-voice Chorus, creating a richer, modulated sound.	Wet Signal, Depth, Rate.
Reverb		A typical Spring Reverb that is often found in guitar amps and is essential for many classic guitar sounds.	Wet/Dry, Reverb Time.

Grit

Named for exactly what it does, this knob lets you dial in an overdriven component with a high-mid boost, creating a beefier sound that cuts through in a mix without you having to overdrive the entire signal. Grit works well with all Guitar, Amp and Drive settings.

Volume

Adjusts the audio output volume of *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* for maintaining an optimal input level into the mixer or subsequent audio processors.

Interactive keyboard



The interactive keyboard is both a display of received MIDI notes and a working on-screen keyboard. The left side of the keyboard (Standard Phrases and Style Phrases) doesn't make any sound by itself. Here, you control the performance of the guitarist by switching between 34 different phrases. 11 of these phrases are set by the style, the rest are always available. The right side of the keyboard (Chords) determines which chord *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* plays based on the note(s) you send.

! The interactive keyboard does not get recorded. Use a MIDI keyboard or the Reason/Reason Essentials On-screen Piano Keys for this purpose.

Standard Phrases

The lower left of the MIDI keyboard (C#1 - B2) is reserved for a collection of so-called "Standard Phrases". These phrases are "hard-wired" and won't change with the Style selection.

Standard Phrases complement the Style Phrases by phrasings that are more generic and applicable to multiple contexts. Combine them with the Style Phrases for maximum variety.

! Phrases are what you make of them. *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* lets you switch phrases in real-time without interrupting the performance. That's a great way to create dynamic and interesting phrasings of your own.

Style Phrases

Keys in this area select phrases of the currently selected Style (see "Style").

Phrases in the Style range start with the lowest density/intensity on C3 and get more complex as you move towards Bb3.

You could generally work your way through a song going from left (intro, verse) to right (chorus), but of course this greatly depends on the style and your song. Just know you always have 11 different rhythms plus the Standard Phrases at your immediate disposal.

The highest key of the Style Range - B3 - is the Stop key. In Latch mode, pressing this key will stop playback (whereas the Silent key (C1) will keep playback going, just with an empty phrase.

Chords

Keys in the Chord range function almost like a regular musical keyboard: You start and stop the guitarist's performance and you determine the chords played. It's like playing keyboard, except that instead of playing notes you select the chord the guitarist will perform as a phrase.

Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords recognizes and plays 10 chord types. More on chords and how to make best use of them in "Chord Sets and Fingerings".

Key

This control sets a key for the song, forcing all chord input to the most useful chords in the selected key.

- **In the "Off" position, all chords in all keys are available:**

Played Note:	C	C#	D	Eb	E	F	F#	G	Ab	A	Bb	B
Played back Chord:	Cmaj	C#maj	Dmaj	Ebmaj	Emaj	Fmaj	F#maj	Gmaj	Abmaj	Amaj	Bbmaj	Bmaj

- **In any other position (C, C#, D, Eb etc.), only the chords matching the set scale are available (see below).**
Using the Key parameter is very handy if your keyboard skills (or musical skills) are basic, or if you want to simplify chord input in general, as it will "quantize" all chord input to chords that aren't entirely wrong for the given key.

When a key is set, these are the chords *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* will play depending on the actual input - shown in the key of C:

Played Note:	C	C#	D	Eb	E	F	F#	G	Ab	A	Bb	B
Played back Chord:	Cmaj	Csus4	Dmin	Ebmaj	Emin	Fmaj	Fsus4	Gmaj	Gsus4	Amin	Bbmaj	G7

The currently played back chord is always displayed in the interactive keyboard display.

Building Custom Phrases

The CV/Gate input on the rear panel of *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* interprets notes differently than when you play on the MIDI keyboard. CV Notes from C#1 to C#5 don't select phrases and chords, but individual slices of which are laid out across the note range.

You can use this feature to create your own phrases by triggering individual "slices" (which are individual strums extracted from the original performance). Try it with a Matrix pattern sequencer!

! Note that the CV/Gate input only replaces the Phrase selection - you still have to play chord notes on your connected MIDI keyboard to get the guitarist strumming away!

CV Note	Function
C1	Stop currently playing slice.
C#1 to C#5	Trigger individual slices.

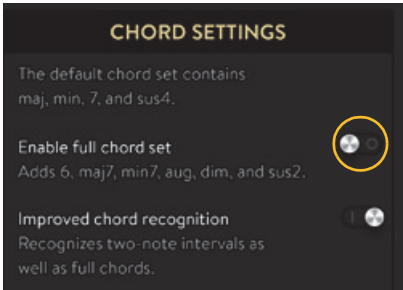
See "CV Input".

Chord Sets and Fingerings

Chord Sets

Chords take up memory in RAM, therefore *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* loads only four chord types by default, although it supports ten different chords.

→ To load the full chord set, press Tab to get to the rear panel view of *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords*, activate the toggle switch labeled "Enable full chord set".



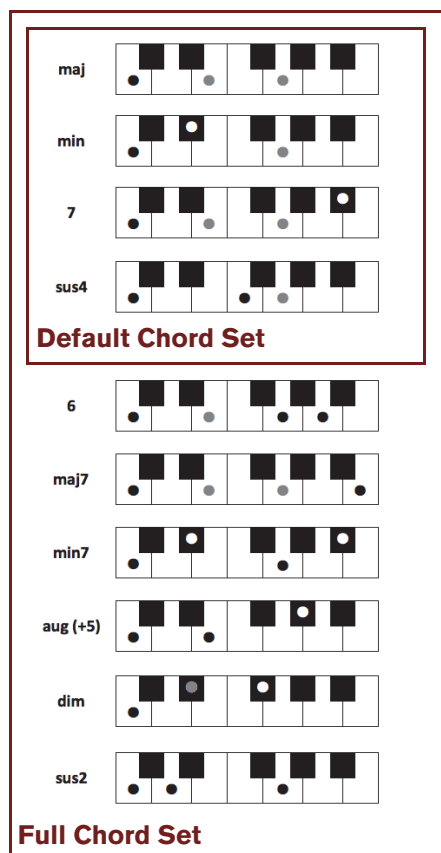
The following selection of chords for the two chord sets is also printed on the rear panel of *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords*:

Default Chord Set:	maj, min, 7, sus4	
Full Chord Set:	maj, min, 7, sus4	6, maj7, min7, aug, dim, sus2

Chord Fingerings

Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords has a built-in chord detection system that interprets incoming MIDI notes. The picture shows the fingering schemes for each variation of chords played in the key of C. The four chord variations at the top shows what is available when you use the default chord set. The remaining six variations becomes available when you use the full chord set (see “Chord Sets”).

! Note that the black and white dots indicate the required notes. Grey dots indicate optional notes.

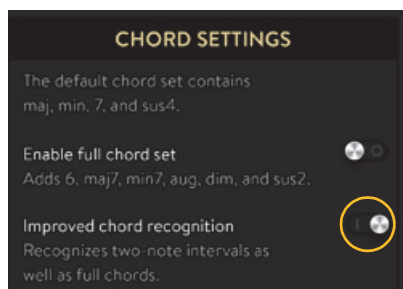


Chord Fingerings (grey dots indicate optional keys).

Improved Chord Recognition

Optionally, *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* also lets you play intervals and interprets matching chords. For example, when you play C and D at the same time, *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* will interpret this as a sus2 chord.

→ To enable the recognition of two-note intervals, press Tab to get to the rear panel view of *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords*, and activate "Improved chord recognition" using the toggle switch.



MIDI Controllers

Pitch Bend

The Pitch Bend wheel can be used for creating bending or vibrato. The pitch range is fixed at ± 2 semitones.

Mod Wheel

Palm Muting is a powerful method for live-controlling the phrasing of *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords*.

- **The Mod Wheel controls the Palm Muting that your guitarist applies to the performance.**
In the Mod Wheel's default position, no Palm Muting is applied. The further you turn it up, the shorter the notes will become. The maximum position of the Mod Wheel produces entirely "tone-less" muted strums.
- **You can add Palm Muting after the fact by adding a lane to your *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* track and recording a Mod Wheel performance on top of your notes. Experiment with multiple tracks with different Mod Wheel performances for greatly enhanced live feel and two-player impressions.**

Aftertouch

Like the Mod Wheel, Aftertouch lets you control Palm Muting, but works like a switch between "no muting" and "full muting."

Expression

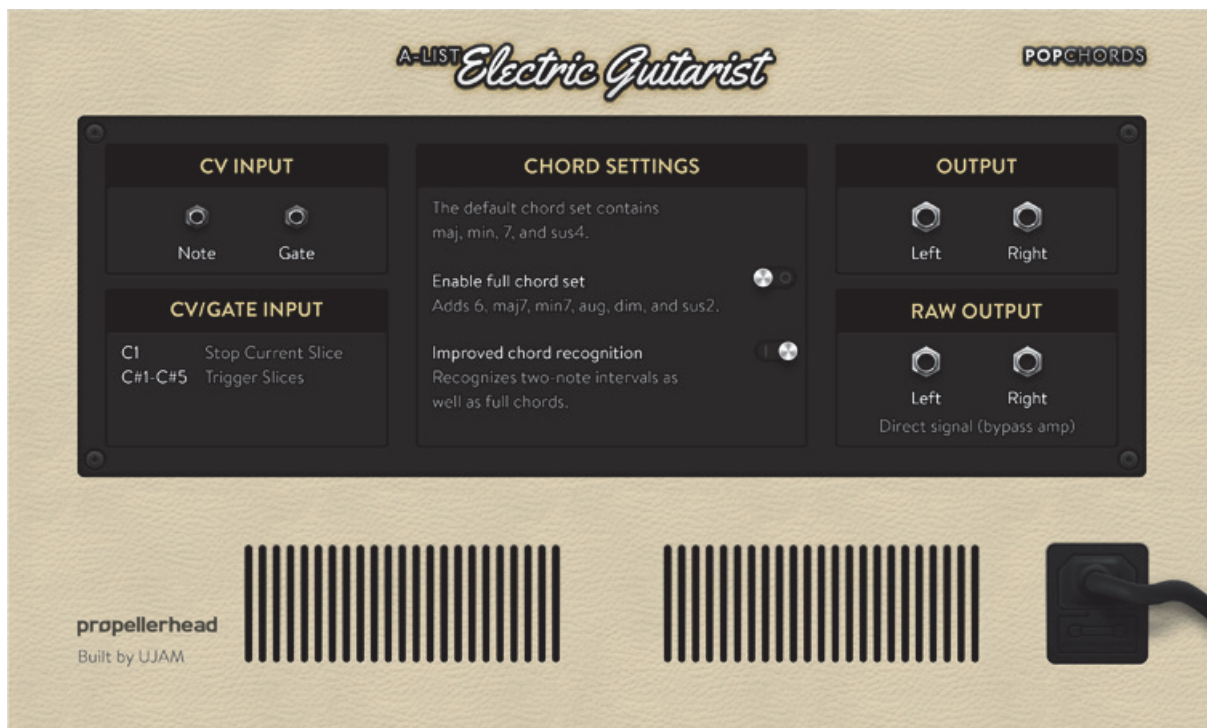
The Expression Controller is used for controlling the volume. The Expression Controller is applied individually to each strum in a phrase, so the volume of the previous step that is still playing is not affected. This can be useful for fine-tuning performances.

- ! **Note that Keyboard Velocity is not used to control volume, as it is difficult to play all notes of a chord with consistent velocity.**

Sustain Pedal

The Sustain Pedal replicates the "Latch" button, so you can use it as an additional way of varying phrases in real-time. Pressing the Sustain Pedal activates latching of chord notes. Releasing the Sustain Pedal releases any latched chord notes even if the Latch button is on.

Connections



! Remember that CV connections are NOT stored in the *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* patches! If you want to store CV connections between devices, put them in a Combinator device and save the Combi patch.

CV Input

The Note and Gate CV inputs can be used for adding extra phrase creation options by using the CV output from another CV/Gate device (typically a Matrix or an RPG-8). Note that the Gate input also responds to keyboard velocity. Please refer to [“Building Custom Phrases”](#) above.

Output

On the right are the main audio outputs. When you create a new *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* device, these outputs are auto-routed to the first available channel in the Reason/Reason Essentials main mixer.

Raw Output

The Raw Output jacks let you access the pre-amp signal directly from the pickup. This is useful if you want to connect your own amp. Both channels will output the same signal unless you enable Doubling.

► For an even stronger separation of both guitar signals, send each one through its own amp chain.

Advanced tips

Optimizing chord recognition

Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords tries to be as tolerant to sloppy chord input as technically possible, but particularly when live-recording to a MIDI track, you may end up with it not playing the chords you had in mind. It's really easy to fix this situation if you keep a few things in mind:

→ **Always quantize your MIDI notes in the sequencer.**

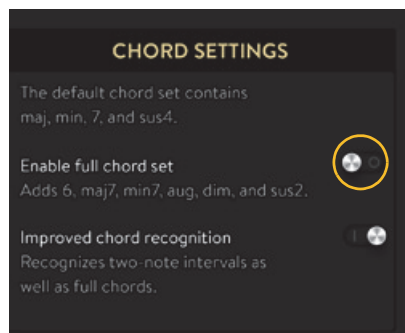
Notes with different starting positions can lead to multiple chords getting recognized one after another, or cut-off chords.

→ **Clean up note lengths to make sure there are no note gaps or overlaps.**

In the Legato Adjustments section of Reasons' Tool Window you can force legato and remove overlaps. Use Gap with a minimum value first to "clean up" the note lengths.

Minimizing memory consumption

How much memory *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* requires entirely depends on the settings of the Chord Set and the Key parameter loaded:



- **The default chord set requires about 373 MB of RAM.**
- **The full chord set increases this figure to around 656 MB.**
- **When setting a key, the allowed chords are all in the default chord set, so if you have the full set selected, you can save memory by switching back to the default chord set on the rear panel of *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords*.**
- **If you use several *Electric Guitarist - Pop Chords* devices in your song, the sample memory is shared among the devices whenever possible.**